West Area Plan
Steering Committee Meeting #10

Date and Time: Thursday, June 18th, 2020
Location: Virtual – Microsoft Teams Meeting

Attendees

STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS (PRESENT)
Rosemary McDonnell-Horita
Brien Darby
Jeanne Granville
Sean Brady
Dannie Dilonno
Kory Whitaker
Jaime Aguilar
Dan Shah
Maureen McCanna
Bree Davies
Adriana Pena
Chala Mohr

ELECTED OFFICIALS/COUNCIL DISTRICT AIDE
Ben Chavez, District 3
Tate Carpenter, District 7   Anita Banuelos, District 7
Melissa Mejia, District 3   Daisy Rocha-Vasquez, District 3

COMMUNITY PLANNING PROJECT TEAM AND PARTNERS
Eugene Howard   Becca Dierschow
Valerie Herrera   Sung Han
Beth Vogelsang, OV   AnaClaudia Magalhaes, DPR
Fernando Abbud, OV   Mondi Mason, DDPHE
Anne Kuechenmeister, MBI   Renee Martinez-Stone, WDRC
Zack Wallace Mendez, DOTI

OTHER GUESTS
Kathy Sandoval
Megan Miles

Welcome and Introductions:
Eugene started the meeting at 6:04pm.

Agenda:
1. Schedule Review
2. Blueprint Denver Equity + Complete Community Guidelines
3. West Area Guiding Principles
4. Opportunity Area Identification (Group Activity)

1. Schedule Review
What will be the West Area Plan's Summer Schedule?
- May - the project team took SC input on modules to refine them, are almost ready to launch.
- June - "Big Layers and Big Moves". Steering Committee can review guiding principles that are part of the modules, define role of equity in plan, layer together the components of complete communities, and identify Major Opportunity Areas (starting with this meeting).

Public Outreach and Engagement
- June – Due to Covid, Steering Committee is still unable to meet with large groups in person. Virtual meetings leave some people out of the conversation. The project team is finding many ways to reach out and are sensitive to the current larger concerns and are open to suggestions/potential solutions.
- Additional Touchpoints:
  - Virtual meetings to community group
  - Virtual module-based public townhall
  - Virtual appointments/'office hours'
  - Conference calls, mail info to home, etc.

- July – We hoped to begin meeting in person, in small groups but Covid is still impacting this decision and staff must follow CDC guidelines during this time for the health and safety of the communities.
  - Steering Committee: promoting online modules among public for additional engagement and feedback on the 4 concepts
  - Continuing to work on equity components
  - Develop/design complete communities for each neighborhood

- Public Outreach/Additional Touchpoints:
  - Virtual or small group gatherings with social distancing,
  - Online/phone appointments

- August – Go into depth on neighborhood recommendations
- Public Outreach/Additional Touchpoints:
  - Small groups,
  - Telephone town hall,
  - Facebook live events with council.
  - The goal will be to have content for the public to respond to that isn't just theoretical.

- September Steering Committee Meeting #12: The goal is to refine final draft recommendations.
- Continue to work to fill the gaps of community promotions and feedback for further engagement as we proceed to drafting the plan.

- Identify community groups that are meeting and may not have been contacted yet.

Question: Could we have yard signs that promote the plan and provide a website or telephone number?
Response: Staff will look into this request further and follow up.

Question: Have we had enough time to engage and bring these modules to the community? Because of Covid, the Committee has lost momentum and time. Are the modules representative of the communities of West?
Response: Good question; we have been gathering information in West for the last 9-10 months, and the modules are reflecting what we've heard from a variety of public meetings over those months. The modules are the starting point for recommendations, not the end. Engagement will not stop in September. Staff fully expects to have iterations of the recommendations in the second draft post first draft review.

Comment: Really hoping business displacement is addressed. With gentrification already taking a toll especially on minority owned businesses, Covid has really accelerated this trend. I know other plans addressed this topic - but I haven't heard any assessment of the issue or suggested solutions in this process.

Comment: Engagement must be more than just surveys. There needs to be interviews and 1:1 engagement with members in the community to hear their needs. Right now, this is not folk's priority...their priority is survival

Follow-up: If the data from two meetings, then the sample size is small, may be biased. Not seeing / talking about gentrification data, would like to see more of that
Response: There will be some topics that need to calibrate with more input and data - some topics such as safety on federal (overall) or parks for example, that we are finishing up work on and will integrate with the help of our partner agencies. Staff will also work to have different manners of engagement.

Question: Demographics from meetings and online survey do not match who live in the neighborhood. We may be missing interests from the wider community.
Anita, CD 7: Maybe this is an area where SC members can get involved to drive more diverse respondents. The Committee is diverse and has a lot of connections to the community. Planning team can train SC to ask questions and gather data.

Comment (Councilwoman Torres): Appreciate how you all are deliberating. It's important to reach consensus. We don't want any residents to feel uncomfortable moving forward.
Sounds like modules are a summary up to this point. All modules and ideas are open for changes - with neighborhood input and voice.

Question/Comment: Want a deliberate conversation around each module and how each tie into the guiding principles of the plan. Are the modules reflective of the guiding principles?

Response: Absolutely - modules are for discussion, can be modified and the recommendations we craft based on the input from the modules will likewise be flexible.

2. Blueprint Denver: Equity Principles and Complete Neighborhoods

As we work with the Steering Committee to develop recommendations, Blueprint Denver equity principles will be at forefront, along with creating complete communities. Every recommendation should be supporting the layers of creating a complete neighborhood.

Equity Principles:
- Improving Access to Opportunity: creating more equitable access to quality-of-life amenities, health and quality education.
- Reducing Vulnerability to Displacement: stabilizing residents and businesses who are vulnerable to involuntary displacement due to increasing property values and rents.
- Expanding Housing and Jobs Diversity: providing a better and more inclusive range of housing and employment options in all neighborhoods.

Complete neighborhoods:
- Land use and Built Form: Enhance the character and quality of neighborhoods.
- Mobility: Connect people to the neighborhood places where they live, work and play.
- Quality of Life and Infrastructure: Provide neighborhoods with parks, trees, natural features, recreation opportunities and civic and social spaces.

Question: Principles are fairly vague. It seems like the plan is focusing on the big picture, and these principles are focusing on the big pictures. Is that right?
Response: Correct - don't want to be so specific as to preclude development, if things change, but do want to create a malleable plan that anticipates change

Question: Did the language of the guiding principles come directly from resident comments?
Response: Yes, they are summaries of comments from public comments, SC comments, etc. Still a working document though

Comment: Would be great to show three equity principles driving **all** sections - LU, Mob, QoL - to give people confidence that the guiding principles will be propping up these pillars of equity.

Question: It is difficult to understand how the 4,000 (NB: 3,000) comments turned into the principles, - could we have those available?
Response: The planning team will put the spreadsheet on the website, and email around to the steering Committee.

3. Opportunity Areas

In order to make recommendations, we need to understand how different aspects of the neighborhoods interact - together to make a complete neighborhood. One way to start thinking about plan recommendations is to layer together the different study areas we've looked at so far, and see if any "opportunity areas" emerge - areas where several recommendations will come together across Land Use, Economics, Mobility, and Quality of Life.

Beth started layering the maps together - Land Use, Economics, Mobility, Quality of Life - so that the Steering Committee could see where some of these areas may be.

Question: Some issues raised by Committee, such as mobility and sidewalks are not reflected on the maps, why not?

Response: There are some issues that are ubiquitous - like sidewalk improvement - that need to be addressed and are not on the maps because it would overwhelm the map.

Comment: By layering all these maps together, some areas emerge as having potential to support many opportunities and improvements that really can support each other. Interests, needs and opportunities are aligning. May evolve into recommendations, right now just an interesting coming together.

<u>Responses to initial "Opportunity Areas" noted by project team:</u>

Question: appreciate that Sun Valley has done a lot of planning, when will Sun Valley recommendations be added to the plan? Especially mobility recommendations which need to be tweaked.
Response: Team will work to add those to the map in the coming month.

Comment: Feel the distance/gap between Tejon and Knox as Mobility Opportunities is significant. I wouldn't consider Federal a safe Mobility Opportunity. Instead of going all the way East to Tejon to head south, many people use Clay which also connects to Huston Lake Park in Athmar.

Comment: Economic/commercial area on 10th Ave seems to conflict with what is existing, which is residential in character. 10th is a residential corridor not a commercial corridor but the maps are showing commercial.
Response: May need to tweak how we represent 10th Ave. Is there room to do anything differently on tenth? Do we want to change anything or not? Currently highlighted because it's a unique connection across the neighborhood - from the Platte to Sheridan Blvd. Not saying what it *should* be. Only an opportunity/a place to have a conversation.

Comment (Councilwoman Torres):
Economic dots are covering residential areas, can it be brought down to just the street - without that wider swath of housing included. Missing small nodes of commercial opportunity.
Response: The team will shrink the width of the opportunity area along 10th Avenue - and maybe add areas along 1st Avenue, if we hear this from the SC and community. All maps can be modified.

Comment: Currently don't see any neighborhood flavor included in the content and modules. This lens might be different than what the overarching plan has in mind.
Response: At this point, we're working at a high level, but working down to granular detail, want to reflect the character of each neighborhood.

Comment of the Cloverleaf: This project is not quite shown how much it is moving forward, and it is important because of the connection of mobility and development. Cloverleaf has been overlooked (much like the rest of Sun Valley/Stadium District). No mention on the mobility map etc.

4. Next Steps:

- Can we identify 4 potential opportunity areas to focus on in the coming months?
  - Ideas
    - One area: River Connectivity - Sun Valley and Valverde
    - Second Area: 1st Avenue

- o Third: Corridors
- o Fourth / Other: Undefined. Suggestions welcome!

Schedule:
The project team would like to host focus groups on each opportunity in the coming months. Although the team originally suggested weekly meetings, the Steering Committee felt this schedule was too tight and has not allowed enough time for Committee members to properly engage with the material or reach out to their neighbors. Therefore, the team will come back in July's steering Committee with an expanded timeline.

[End of Meeting]